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# Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2011

## I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past six months pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended in subsequent resolutions, most recently through resolution 1965 (2010).

## II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the period under review, the ceasefire in the Israel-Syria sector was maintained and the UNDOF area of operation remained generally quiet. However, in the latter part of the reporting period, anti-Government demonstrations in the Syrian Arab Republic spread to several villages in the area of limitation on the Syrian (Bravo) side. UNDOF supervised the area of separation by means of fixed positions and patrols to ensure that military forces of either party were excluded from it. UNDOF also carried out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the areas of limitation. Liaison officers from the party concerned accompanied the inspection teams. As in the past, both sides denied inspection teams access to some of their positions and imposed restrictions on the Force's freedom of movement. Beyond such routine and temporary restrictions, beginning in late April and continuing through the time of drafting the present report, Observer Group Golan teams encountered restrictions of movement in the southern part of the area of limitation on the Bravo side, where Syrian authorities denied access, including in the vicinities of Al Asbah, Al Harrah, Nawa, Qasim, Tafas and Tasil, ostensibly to ensure the safety and security of the military observers.

3. In addition, on two occasions, on 15 May and 5 June, demonstrations in the UNDOF area of operations commemorating the anniversaries of Al-Nakba and An-Naksa resulted in an unconfirmed number of civilian casualties and put the long-held ceasefire in jeopardy.

4. On 15 May, a group of approximately 4,000 civilians, the vast majority Palestinians, gathered over the course of several hours at a location known as "the family shouting place", in the area of separation on the Bravo side of the UNDOFs



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area of operation, opposite the village of Majdal Chams in the area of limitation on the Israeli-occupied Golan (Alpha) side. UNDOF had no prior notification of the demonstration. The gathering was supervised by Syrian security forces and the Syrian authorities. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) observed the demonstration from behind the IDF technical fence, which is beyond the ceasefire line on the Alpha side. Early in the afternoon on that same day, approximately 300 of the demonstrators suddenly moved towards the Alpha side and, despite the presence of the Syrian police, crossed the ceasefire line, passed through an unmarked mine field and broke through the IDF technical fence. IDF, which had reinforced its presence in the area, used tear gas and fired warning shots followed by direct fire to disperse crowds at the fence. Approximately 100 of the protestors entered Majdal Chams and demonstrated in the town centre.

5. The UNDOF Force Commander was in direct contact with Syrian authorities on the spot on the Bravo side, attempting to persuade the crowd to pull back. He also crossed to the Alpha side to liaise with the IDF commander on the ground to bring about an end to the confrontation. Subsequently, the majority of the civilians that had crossed the ceasefire line returned to the Syrian side, after which they voluntarily began to leave the area. A total of 44 civilian casualties, including four fatalities from IDF fire, were reported, but UNDOF has not been able to confirm these numbers. On 17 May, two civilians were returned by IDF through UNDOF and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the Syrian authorities. UNDOF is investigating the incident and both parties have agreed in principle to cooperate in the UNDOF investigation.

6. Following the 15 May protests, and in anticipation of informally announced protests planned for 5 June, the UNDOF Force Commander met with Syrian and Israeli authorities in an effort to mitigate the risk of further violence on the Golan. Syrian authorities provided assurance of their cooperation with and support for UNDOF. IDF said that it would follow its rules of engagement, allowing for escalating deterrence measures culminating in live direct fire, and that it would implement harsh measures against anyone crossing the ceasefire line and technical fence. The UNDOF Force Commander emphasized the need to practice maximum restraint. ICRC planned to be present on the Golan in order to assist in the event of casualties and to facilitate the return of any demonstrators back to the Bravo side.

7. On 5 June, demonstrators, mostly young unarmed Palestinians, again amassed in the vicinity of the "family shouting place", opposite Majdal Chams (near UNDOF position 16), and in the town of Quneitra (UNDOF positions 22 and 27), including at the nearby Charlie Gate, the designated official crossing point for UNDOF between the Alpha and Bravo sides. Despite the presence of Syrian security forces, protestors attempted to breach the ceasefire line at both locations. IDF used tear gas and smoke grenades to deter the protesters and live fire to prevent them crossing the ceasefire line. In the course of these events, several anti-tank mines exploded due to a brush fire apparently started by tear gas or smoke grenade canisters near UNDOF facilities at Charlie Gate, resulting in casualties among protesters. Syrian and Israeli fire squads and UNDOF extinguished the fire. Although UNDOF could not confirm the number of casualties during the 5 June events, up to 23 persons have been reported killed and many more wounded.

8. UNDOF kept a distance from the confrontations but monitored the events from its positions and with armoured patrols. The UNDOF Force Commander was

engaged with IDF and Syrian authorities on the ground, both in Quneitra and at the "family shouting place" opposite Majdal Chams in an effort to de-escalate tensions. During the events, three protesters scaled the walls of UNDOF position 16 and briefly entered the facility, while other protesters threw rocks at the position. Rocks were also thrown at the Force Commander while he was trying to calm the situation. UNDOF position 22D (an outpost of position 22) and a nearby detachment of the UNDOF military police were evacuated to Camp Ziouani for safety reasons. At the time of writing, UNDOF was seeking to confirm the facts and help calm a situation in the area that continued to be volatile.

9. UNDOF continued to adapt its operational posture to the ongoing IDF training activities in the area of limitation on the Alpha side and Syrian civilian development growth in proximity to the ceasefire line in the area of separation. UNDOF constructed a new position, which was completed in May, in the southern part of the area of separation. New defensive positions were constructed on the Bravo side in the area of limitation. Both sides maintained existing defensive positions in the respective areas of limitation. Israeli customs officials continue to operate periodically at the IDF post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

10. The Force continued to assist ICRC with the passage of persons through the area of separation. During the past six months, UNDOF assisted in the crossing of 2 pilgrims and 254 students, and in 31 humanitarian crossings. UNDOF and ICRC facilitated the return to the Syrian authorities of two civilians detained by IDF following the incident of 15 May in the UNDOF area of operation. In addition, UNDOF provided medical treatment to 70 civilians and facilitated the transfer of 12,000 tons of apples.

11. In the area of operation, especially in the vicinity of the ceasefire line, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the long-term presence of the mines and the deterioration of their detonation systems, the threat has increased. UNDOF continued to carry out operational mine clearance and also supported two civilian mine-clearing projects. Coordination with other agencies is continuing in an effort to assist in increasing the level of mine awareness among the civilian population, in particular among children, as well as exploring ways to assist those who have been injured by mine accidents. UNDOF is preparing to continue the project along the Bravo line in order to accurately and clearly mark portions of the lines delineating the area of separation.

12. The UNDOF Force Commander and his staff maintained close contact with the military authorities of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both sides generally cooperated with the Force in the execution of its tasks.

13. In view of the population growth and multiple construction developments in the areas of separation and limitation, the expansion of agricultural and cattle-grazing areas, and an overall increase in civilian activities, the UNDOF civil affairs capacity, composed of a Civil Affairs Officer and the Observer Group Golan, enhanced its liaison with local authorities and its engagement with local civilians to explain the Mission's mandate and activities.

14. As at 1 May 2011, UNDOF comprised 1,041 troops from Austria (377), the Philippines (346), India (190), Croatia (95), Japan (31) and Canada (2). A total of 15 personnel are employed by Japan as a national support element. In addition,

79 military observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks. With a view to fully implementing United Nations Headquarters policies, in January 2011 UNDOF started integrating support services by placing the military logistics unit under the Mission's Integrated Support Services Section, in accordance with the policy on integrated support services of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

## III. Financial aspects

15. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, which amounts to $49.6 million, is currently under consideration by the General Assembly during the second part of its resumed sixty-fifth session. Therefore, should the Security Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 17 below with respect to the extension of the mandate of UNDOF, the cost for the maintenance of the Force during the extension period will be limited to resources approved by the General Assembly.

16. As at 30 April 2011, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNDOF amounted to $18.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,780.4 million.

17. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 28 February 2011 and 31 December 2010, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

18. The Security Council, when deciding in its resolution 1965 (2010) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2011, also called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately its resolution 338 (1973), and requested me to submit, at the end of the period, a report on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts undertaken at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was dealt with in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/65/379) submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 64/20, entitled "Jerusalem", and 64/21, entitled "The Syrian Golan".

## V. Observations

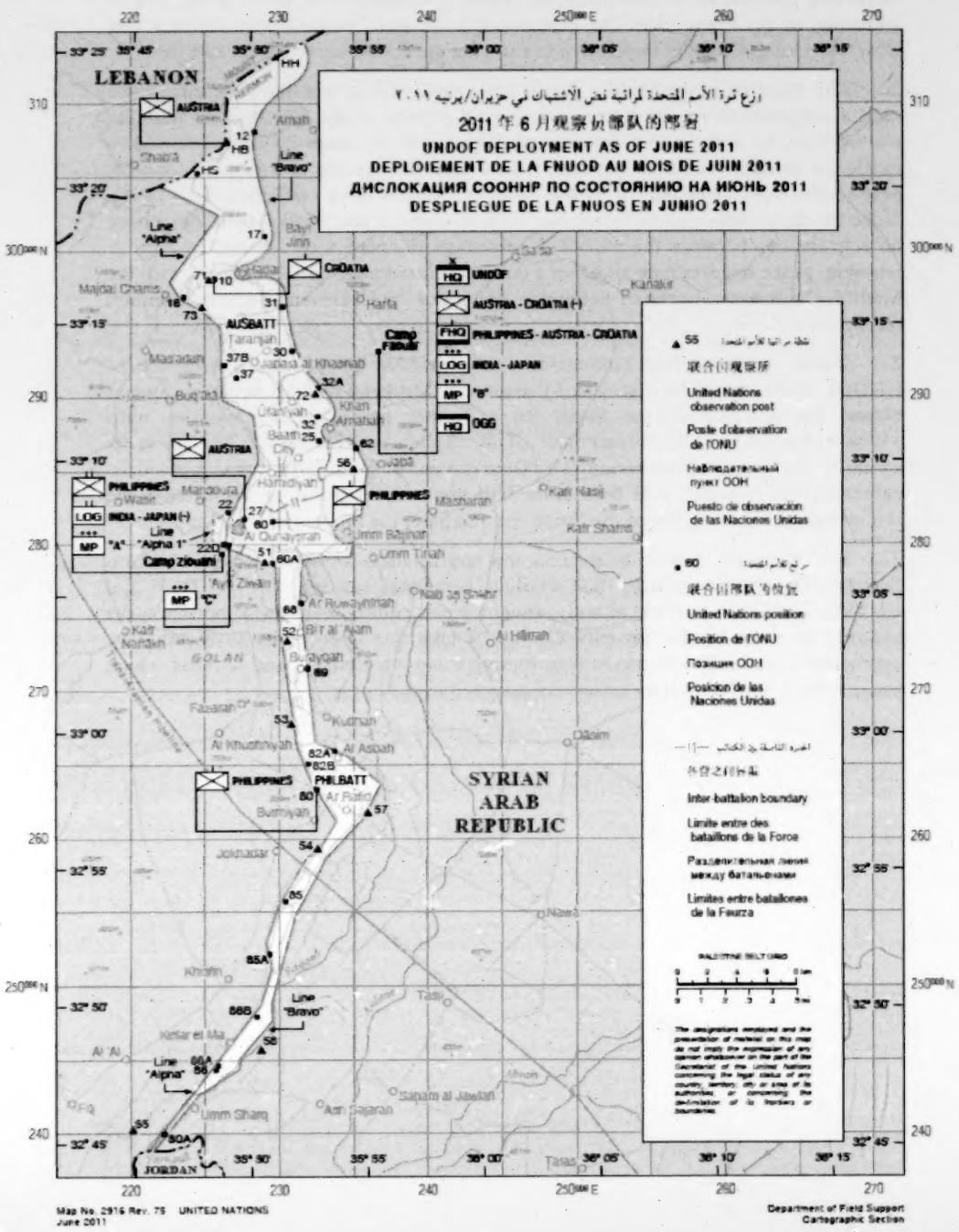
19. Although the situation in the Israel-Syria sector remained generally quiet during the reporting period, the serious events that occurred in the UNDOF area of operation on 15 May and 5 June are of grave concern. I call on both parties to show restraint and refrain from provocations so as to prevent the escalation of tensions along the ceasefire line. UNDOF, which was established in May 1974 to supervise the ceasefire called for by the Security Council and the agreement on disengagement between Syrian and Israeli forces of 31 May 1974, has continued to perform its functions, with the cooperation of the parties. However, I am concerned by the

increasing restrictions of movement on Observer Group Golan teams in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. The unimpeded freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan is imperative in carrying out the Mission's mandated tasks.

20. The situation in the Middle East is tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. I hope that determined efforts will be made by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973). Since the discontinuation in December 2008 of indirect peace talks, there have been no negotiations between the parties. I encourage the parties to resume, as soon as possible, peace negotiations aimed at a comprehensive peace in accordance with the Madrid Conference terms of reference for peace and relevant Security Council resolutions.

21. Under the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2011. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel also has expressed its agreement. It is hoped that both sides will continue to make efforts to ease the limitations on the mobility of the Force and facilitate the movement of its supplies.

22. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Major General Natalio Ecarma III and the military and civilian personnel serving with UNDOF and UNTSO. They have performed with efficiency and commitment the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those which provide the UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
ISRAEL
GOLAN
وزع ثرة الأمم المتحدة لمراقبة فض الاشتباك في حزيران/يونيه ٢٠١١
2011 年 6 月观察员部队的部署
UNDOF DEPLOYMENT AS OF JUNE 2011
DEPLOIEMENT DE LA FNUOD AU MOIS DE JUIN 2011
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ СООННР ПО СОСТОЯНИЮ НА ИЮНЬ 2011
DESPLIEGUE DE LA FNUOS EN JUNIO 2011
AUSTRIA
CROATIA
AUSBATT
PHILIPPINES
PHILBATT
INDIA - JAPAN (-)
Camp Faouar
Camp Ziouani
Line "Alpha"
Line "Alpha 1"
Line "Bravo"
HQ UNDOF
AUSTRIA - CROATIA (-)
FHQ PHILIPPINES - AUSTRIA - CROATIA
LOG INDIA - JAPAN
MP "B"
HQ OGG
MP "A"
MP "C"
United Nations observation post
Poste d'observation de l'ONU
Наблюдательный пункт ООН
Puesto de observación de las Naciones Unidas
United Nations position
Position de l'ONU
Позиция ООН
Posición de las Naciones Unidas
Inter battalion boundary
Limite entre des bataillons de la Force
Разделительная линия между батальонами
Límites entre batallones de la Fuerza
PALESTINE BELT LAND
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Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section